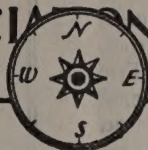


The COMPASS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS



November 1940

USE OF SERVICE RATINGS IN EVALUATION
OF PERFORMANCE

Elizabeth Cosgrove

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF MULTIPLE
SERVICE IN THE PUBLIC AGENCY

Elizabeth de Schweinitz

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES OF ST. LOUIS AGENCY
SUBJECT OF AASW INQUIRY AND REPORT

SUPERVISED FIELD WORK IN EDUCATION
FOR SOCIAL CASE WORK

Report of Boston Chapter

Volume XXII

Number 2

DENVER and Missouri have completed relief studies recently, and this COMPASS tells more about those valuable documents on another page. Their publication gives the occasion, however, to point to the long and honorable record of such studies by the American Association of Social Workers.

The first national canvass of relief needs was made by the AASW in April of 1932. Chapters furnished the information. The national office and a Committee on Federal Relief put the material together and Senator Robert F. LaFollette and the late Senator Costigan of Colorado made use of it.

A few months earlier the AASW had marshalled the social work testimony for the Costigan-LaFollette federal relief bill, which held the stage during two weeks of exciting and page one Senate Committee hearings, and two more weeks of Senate debate. Without the support of the Democratic organization of the Senate, and facing a certain Hoover veto, the bill was beaten by a few votes. But those hearings and the efforts of those Senators were the inspiration of the later federal relief enactments.

In May of 1932 Senator Costigan set up another one day hearing in which the only testimony, aside from a statement by the A F of L was the AASW relief study. A day later, the Democratic organization in the Senate announced that it would support a relief measure, followed by President Hoover's announcement of a plan for RFC relief loans to states.

FERA when established produced data on needs and relief not available before on a national scale, and both FERA and WPA have published studies about various factors about relief of the greatest value. When FERA was discontinued, however, the country was again without a key to the extent of need. The annual AASW survey of relief needs from 1935 to 1940 has drawn public attention and official notice to the gaps in the program.

Chapters have made important studies of relief needs for states and cities for several years. Some of those efforts have reached public notice on a national scale as did the work of the Cleveland chapter last winter.

IT is significant of another developmental step that the two studies mentioned this month in THE COMPASS are produced under other auspices, although largely under the stimulation and by the work of AASW chapters. Denver's Department of Public Welfare produced one study, and the Missouri project was under the auspices of a statewide association of social welfare.

With the first line of national defense

Contents

Article	Page
Use of Service Ratings in the Evaluation of Performance	3
ELIZABETH COSGROVE	
Advantages and Disadvantages of Multiple Services in the Public Agency...	5
ELIZABETH DE SCHWEINITZ	
Supervised Field Work in Education for Social Case Work.....	7
Report of the St. Louis Inquiry.....	10
Place of Probation and Parole.....	12
Report on Social Work Jobs.....	13
National Board Meeting.....	14
New Relief Studies.....	16
Case Work Paper Contest.....	20

THE COMPASS

Published monthly except September by
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS
Publication office 374 Broadway, Albany, N. Y.
Editorial and General office 130 East 22nd St.,
New York, N. Y.

VOLUME XXII

NUMBER 2

Officers

Wayne McMillen, *Pres.* Kenneth L. M. Pray, *3rd V-Pres.*
Pierce Atwater, *1st V-Pres.* James Brunot, *Treas.*
Frank J. Bruno, *2nd V-Pres.* Frank J. Hertel, *Sec.*
Walter West.....*Executive Secretary*

Assistant Secretaries: Dorothy C. Kahn, Grace F. Marcus,
Elisabeth Mills

THE COMPASS: Edited by the Staff

Entry as second-class matter at the post office at
Albany, N. Y.

Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917,
authorized June 28, 1924

Subscription: Non-Members \$1.00 per annum. Subscription of members of the Association included in annual dues.

acknowledged to be in the social welfare programs of the country, work of this nature, long a part of AASW chapter and national concern, assumes major national importance.

Use of Service Ratings in the Evaluation of Performance

By **Elizabeth Cosgrove**, Senior Examiner,
U. S. Civil Service Commission

THERE are those who have not used service ratings in the evaluation of performance, there are those who are now working out a method of rating personnel, and there are those who have had service ratings thrust upon them. There is consequently a wide variety of emotional tones and degrees of readiness to accept whatever will be offered here on the subject.¹

The term "service ratings" will be used to designate a formal plan for the evaluation of performance at regular, designated intervals. The discussion will be aimed primarily at problems arising in the field of social case work although basic principles and objectives outlined will be the same regardless of the field in which personnel is evaluated.

The increase in the number of social work positions in the last ten years, the development of new types of social welfare programs in both public and private fields, and the installation and expansion of formal personnel policies and procedures have brought added attention of social case workers to a responsibility about which they have always been mindful. They have always known that the worker must constantly evaluate his own work and that his work must be evaluated by others if he is to be effective in dealing with individuals in need. They have responded to the evident necessity of concentrating on this matter of evaluation. There seems to be no section of the country where agencies are not evolving rating plans and making inquiries as to "how to do it." Many have worked out valuable material for their own use and have made it available to others interested in the same subject. Many of the plans under consideration comprise outlines and lists of suggested questions for use in analyzing a case worker's performance; they offer bases for direction of an evaluation but generally necessitate a report in narrative form to be made either continuously or periodically. This type of outline is more likely to be found in private case work agencies where the number of workers is comparatively small. Another type, more generally used in public agencies, represents more nearly what is known as a rating

scale where factors to be rated are listed. These factors are aimed to designate the strengths and limitations of the workers; this type seems to be used in agencies where there is an attempt to centralize matters pertaining to personnel policies and procedures. The former type shows a decided interest in and use of the psychiatric approach in evaluation of an individual worker's performance. The latter type shows a tendency to use the methodology of the research psychologist. All of this is by way of saying that there is plenty of evidence that social case workers are making a real effort to fulfill their obligations.

This discussion cannot do more than point the way to a few underlying principles of service rating. There will be no formula given as to "how to do it." The use of formal rating scales in connection with evaluation of performance is neither recent nor modern. Their more recent development has been largely influenced by research psychologists. Their use has had its ups and downs. Rating scales in current use show signs of their origin in a wide variety of experimentation. Claims made by exponents of one type or another range from completely reliable and accurate rating to mere guides to comparative opinions, recorded for one purpose or another. Evaluation of any or all types is beyond the scope of this discussion and beyond the competence of the discussant. Regardless of the type of rating scale advocated, however, there seems to be some agreement on several points among those who have labored thoughtfully in their development and use: one, that there is no one type of scale that can be guaranteed to obtain all of the results hoped for; two, that the success of any scale depends on how it is developed and how it is used; third, that no individual or group knows all the answers to the questions inherent in the use of any rating scale. Actual experience in the use of several types of scales brings one to ready agreement on those points.

What, then, are some of the types of scales in use? This group is not concerned with those scales which are devised primarily to measure efficiency in production. However, inasmuch as some scales are devised to measure efficiency or evaluate performance in many

¹ This paper was read at National Conference of Social Work, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1940.

kinds of activities, the following descriptions will not be confined to those service ratings which are devised to evaluate professional performance only.

The listing of traits or qualities or factors characterizes most rating scales. The Graphic Rating Scale which is in use in many fields of activity generally takes the form of a list of traits or activities to be rated, arrived at by an analysis of factors leading to success or failure on the job, and various descriptive phrases or adjectives denoting several degrees of the activity or trait being rated. A linear scale is used. The rating officer places a check above the phrase which best describes the employee's attributes. Relative weights of points on the scale determine the distribution of final ratings. The principles upon which the Graphic Rating Scale are based are seen in many scales. Final scores are sometimes indicated in percentages or by the alphabet; "A" representing best performance, or by adjectives such as Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Unsatisfactory. This type of scale has been used extensively and has been modified and improved or vitiated according to one's evaluation of the methods used. One large civil service jurisdiction has attempted to eliminate dependence on human judgment in assigning ratings on total performance or individual factors. The method involved depends on current reports of service which can be substantiated by evidence. By the use of that method everything that cannot be supported by evidence is excluded from the rating. A central reviewing board reviews all ratings and a liaison officer evaluates the accuracy of judgments by conferences with each rater. Three distinct forms are used but the fundamental requirement of substantiated evidence is applied to the use of all forms.

Another type of rating system which is known as the Probst system, lists over a hundred kinds of behavior the majority of which are considered to be objectively observable. They are called "outstanding traits or qualities" that are either above or below average. The rater checks only those items which he can check with some assurance. The use of this system has been extensive.

More recent types of rating scales based on psychological measurements and the psychophysical methods of scale building as developed by L. L. Thurstone have been made and used both in private industries and in public service. Statements concerning the efficiency of the man on the job are collected from a wide variety of persons, given a quantitative value on a scale with equal units in such a way that endorsement or refusal to endorse may be interpreted in quantitative terms.

The U. S. Civil Service Commission and agencies having positions subject to the Classification Act, use a method of rating on which performance is indicated for rating under three major headings: I. Quality of Performance, II. Productiveness, III. Qualifications Shown on Job. Elements listed under each major heading are marked in three degrees: "✓ if neither strong nor weak point; - if weak; + if strong point." A numerical rating assigned to each major heading is added and then translated into one of five adjective ratings which is given to the employee.

Regardless of the assets or defects which apply to any kind of rating scale or plan of service rating, there appears to be one major objective underlying their development and use. This is "to determine the specific strengths and weaknesses of the employee so as to provide a basis for helping him to improve himself thus resulting in an improvement of the service." It is obviously, then, directed towards what is currently called in social case work and other fields a program of staff development. The important aspects of any system of evaluation become not *what* rating scale or *what* plan of evaluation is used but *how* it is developed and *how* it is used, keeping forever in mind the primary objective of the plan. Volumes have already been written on these aspects of the subject.² Some of you are familiar with the snares and pitfalls of attempting to institute a plan without being familiar with the experimentation and attempts that have been made earlier by others to solve what is actually a highly technical problem. The research psychologists have helped to make great improvements in techniques of rating and are on the way to showing how the dangers of recorded personal opinion may be reduced to a minimum. In evaluating social case work performance there is the ever-present belief that in evaluating the performance of human beings it is not only impossible to eliminate personal biases entirely but there may be a positive value in the presence of subjective factors if their presence is recognized. Actually the process of rating performance of employees is individual case work with employees.³ For that reason this group is fully conscious of the constant operation of personal reactions and of the influence of one personality on another. Serious students in the field of social case

² Useful bibliographies in this field have been recently prepared by S.T.A.S., Soc. Sec. Bd. 1939 and by H. S. Belinsky, M.A. Thesis, University of Chicago Library, on "Problems of Service Rating."

³ Meriam, Lewis, "Public Personnel Problems," Brookings Institution, Washington, D. C., 1938, p. 52.

(Continued on page 17)

Advantages and Disadvantages of Multiple Services in the Public Agency

By Elizabeth de Schweinitz, Consultant in Child Welfare, State Department of Public Welfare, Maryland

PART I

With a law which permits County Welfare Boards to administer a wide variety of public welfare services, and with a strong conviction that some integration of services is necessary and desirable for Maryland, the State Department of Welfare and each County Board is constantly faced with the question of *extent* and *method*. Shall this new need be met by the County Welfare Board, and if so, *how*?

In answering this question, Department and Boards, like everyone else who has worked with this problem, have found that there is no one pattern which fits every community perfectly, nor any one community permanently; but whatever the structure there are certain common values which must be protected and certain losses which must be guarded against if public agencies are to meet the needs of the community and give the best possible help to clients.

This paper¹ is based largely on Maryland's experience and is an attempt to summarize what seemed to me the assets and liabilities in administering a variety of services through one agency.

I have used the term "casework" to mean the entire contact of the agency with the individual rather than a special kind of help which the worker is able to give the client because of his skill, or a particular form or method by which various kinds of help are given. Thus, we would be concerned in this discussion with the entire process of providing help for individuals, which would include what is given as well as the conditions upon which help is given, the details of the procedure as well as the quality of the relationship.

"Multiple services" I have taken to mean services having an essential difference in type or kind, or in the agency's relation to the client.

An agency administering all forms of financial assistance might conceivably be considered to provide many services when compared with an agency administering only OAA: a child placing agency which accepts children of all ages for temporary or longtime care or

for adoption might be said to provide many services when compared with a child placing agency which places only children under three, temporarily. But since one is all financial assistance and the other concerned with the placement of children in foster homes, the services are more alike than different. Those agencies I would therefore think of as single function agencies. Placement of children, and financial assistance, are only two of a number of different services provided for individuals, by both public and private agencies, which may be used or rejected by them.

Even more profound distinctions exist between some of the different kinds of services which are accepted as the responsibility of many public agencies and which are part of the program of some of the Maryland County Welfare Boards. First, there is the difference between services requested by the client (of which financial assistance and child placing would be illustrations), and functions which the agency assumes as the representative of the community or the law. Take for example, the contrast between offering help to a parent in the placement of his child and serving as the community's representative in insisting that the parent do something about a given situation which concerns a child. In these two kinds of situations there are perhaps more similarities in attitude and in action than have been always recognized;² and it is certainly true that in both instances an essential service is being given to the child; but the fundamental difference between providing service which the client may take or reject, and initiating action which the client must do something about, cannot be overlooked and should not be minimized.

Another important difference exists between services which the agency provides directly and controls entirely, and those which it furnishes as an extension of another agency or

¹ This paper was read at the National Conference of Social Work, Grand Rapids, 1940.

² See discussion by Miss Alice Rue on worker's acceptance of protective work in "Worker and Supervisor," an FWAA publication.

institution. Illustrations of the latter are frequent in Maryland where some of the County Welfare Boards provide not only probation service for the Court, but also a varying amount of service to institutions including preliminary study, investigation after commitment, and parole. In these instances, the service is primarily to the institution even though the client may also be served thereby. To give this kind of service effectively, it is necessary to distinguish between accepting and carrying a definite part of the other agency's job *and* using the County Welfare Board's contact with the client to enforce some part of the other agency's plan for this client. For instance, the County Welfare Board may serve the School Board in determining eligibility for free bus rides for school children, but this is essentially different from the use of the County Welfare Board to enforce the school attendance of a child who happens to be known to the agency in other ways. This problem is not exclusive to the multiple function agency, but it is more difficult for it than for the single function agency, because it is hard to be perfectly clear about the fact that the contact with clients may include many things, but still must be confined to services for which it, as an agency, has accepted responsibility, and cannot be used to coerce the client to do things which are part of another agency's responsibility.

Thus, multiple services in this discussion include services which differ from each other in kind; in whether they are requested by the client or initiated by the agency; and in whether the primary responsibility rests with the County Welfare Board or with another agency.

Two general considerations which affect our whole discussions are the size of the community; and the point of view or philosophy with which we approach the work of providing services to people.

Size of the community is a determining factor in whether *any* division of social work services seems sound and practical from the standpoint of organization alone. In general, we accept the fact that in a large city it is important to have some divisions even if these are only separate departments of one organization. We would also say that in a county where the entire social work staff will total not more than four or five, there are many reasons why it is undesirable, if not impossible, to have two agencies. But we need to know more of the relative values in social work, of agencies of different sizes. In this paper I have attempted to deal with some of the general values and disadvantages, which

would be modified by further consideration of size.

In regard to the philosophy, or the point of view with which we approach the job, we need to define the goal which we set for ourselves as case workers before we can be clear about what constitutes advantage or disadvantage in a multiple function agency. Do we assume primary responsibility for the adjustment of the individual, or is our purpose the best possible provision and administration of specific services? At first glance, this may seem like saying the same thing in different words, but if we examine it further the difference becomes apparent, and it is a difference *not* necessarily inherent in the singleness or the multiplicity of agency function. If we have the first goal and our attention is centered on effecting a better adjustment for the client, financial assistance, placement of his child, consultative help, are thought of as the means of bringing this about—in fact they have been called the tools which the case worker uses in solving the client's problems. This better adjustment may involve change within the client himself, or in his environment, and the agency takes responsibility for initiating, or organizing, or producing this change.

This aim may be held by a single function agency as well as a multiple function agency. A worker in a child placing agency may conceive it as his job to improve a parent's relation to his child through foster home placement; a worker in an agency giving only financial assistance may see it as his primary task to change the quality of family life.

If we have the second purpose, our attention is directed toward the way in which the service or services for which the client is asking or the agency has taken responsibility can best be given, and this also includes knowledge and understanding of other resources which may be needed by the client and which one agency does not have. This may bring about a better adjustment involving both environmental and psychological change for the client, and the better the administration of services the more surely and the more frequently this will happen. But the achievement of it is the client's and not the agency's. The service or services of the agency may be the tools which the client uses, but he is the carpenter—not the worker.

This purpose is just as possible for the multiple function agency as for the single function agency, and it is also just as applicable when the functions include protective or authoritative ones, though here it is important

(Continued on page 14)

Supervised Field Work in Education for Social Case Work

The material which follows is the tentative report of the Committee on the Study of Field Work, Boston Chapter. The Committee was composed of Elizabeth Bissell, Emily U. Bissell, Dorothy Book, Dorothy G. Burpee, Opal Fisher, Ruth Lloyd, Ina L. Morgan, Louise Silbert, Maida Solomon, Villa West, Marian Wyman; Pearl K. Lodgen, Secretary, and Harriett M. Bartlett, Chairman. The purpose of this committee was to study supervised field work as a basic part of training in social case work and from the viewpoint of the social agency. Since the subject is complex and as yet relatively unformulated, this material is not regarded as complete in its present form, but is offered at this time for discussion purposes.

It seemed necessary to limit the scope of our project and we have selected this one area of field work to study first. Since we have had longer experience in supervising students in social case work and the largest number of students take this training, it seemed advisable to work out our approach and method through this type of teaching. It will be desirable to supplement this report with other studies later in the areas of group work, community organization, and social research in order to give a picture of field work in all its major aspects.

FIELD work involves the application of a body of knowledge to the practice of an art. Practice enables the student to apply the theories and knowledge gained in the classroom to actual situations, thus to develop professional attitudes and skills through supervised experience. Such "clinical experience" is now essential before any person is considered qualified for professional practice of social case work. This type of supervision is part of a formal educational curriculum and is to be clearly distinguished from the agency's own supervision of its staff, either in the form of regular supervision of case practice or special programs for in-service training. Since its aim is professional practice in a broad sense, supervised field work presupposes a period of induction in the first job before the worker is able to carry full responsibility.

This report is intended to cover the full professional training course and the principles and methods here set forth are to be considered applicable to both years of the student's experience and to all case work fields. It is assumed in this report that the philosophy and theory of generic social case work taught in schools of social work are applicable to case work practice in any setting.

We divided our analysis into two parts, of which the first, presented in this report, covers the teaching of case work practice itself; and the second, which may be released later, the standards and working relationships in several areas, such as evaluation of student performance, qualifications of field work teachers, the agency approach to teaching, and correlation of teaching between agency and school. The first part now follows:

The agency and the community: In order to practice successfully the student must learn the relation between the client's need and the agency's function. Both should be understood in their relation to the whole community, its social structure and its social work program. This means that:

1. The student should attain some identification with the agency's purposes and functions as they relate to the client and the community.
2. She should have field work in at least two agencies and should come to know them in such a manner that she is not confused by their deviation from the usual pattern, but appreciates clearly their character as specific settings within which social case work is carried on.
3. She should be somewhat familiar with the other representative types of agencies through working with them.
4. She should become aware of limitations in the community program and of her responsibility for influencing the development of more adequate resources.

Basic concepts: The student carries with her from the classroom a group of major concepts which are basic for social case work. In the field she learns to apply these to concrete experience. The most important of these have to do with needs, processes, and interrelationships that center around the following:

- Individual
- Family
- Neighborhood
- Community
- Culture

Teaching values of a single case:

1. The teaching of case work practice begins with an individual who has come to the agency's attention through direct application or through referral from another source. The student learns to gather material through the interview and through other methods and to gain some understanding of the presenting situation in the following terms:

- Need as expressed by the referral source
- Need as expressed by the client
- Need as seen by the student
- Need as related to agency function

2. The student has her first experience in feeling the relatedness of the case work processes by simultaneously carrying through the following in the case:

- Study
- Diagnosis
- Treatment

3. Diagnostic thinking is aided by attempting to answer such questions as these:

- What is the nature of the precipitating situation?

- What is the degree of the client's participation? Can he move to help himself in any way?

- How is he using this experience with the worker?

- What does she need to learn of his past in order to clarify questions the present situation raises as to his ability to use help?

- How does analysis of the present situation give leads to patterns in the client's behavior which affect his ability to participate in a treatment relationship?

- What clues are there for necessary further study?

- How should collateral sources be used?

4. The treatment process has been continuous with the diagnostic process from the initial contact in the case and during this exploratory period has been especially used as a test of the client's capacity to use help. The diagnostic process has now reached a stage which permits client and student worker to move along more clearly in treatment plans toward a jointly defined goal. The student next has experience in the different treatment approaches, namely, through the environment and through direct relation with the client. She sees the manner in which one or another type of treatment may be used for various purposes, according to the client's particular need and ability to respond. She sees also how diverse methods of treatment may be

variously combined at successive stages of the same case or in different cases. The student should acquire some proficiency in the simpler forms of treatment, but more practice will be needed for the fuller development of professional skills. The student learns what careful diagnostic thinking is required to select the appropriate treatment approach in relation to each client's need, also how constant re-evaluation of the treatment approach and of additional study material is necessitated as the case develops. Termination of the treatment relationship in a constructive manner is the final step to be learned by the student worker.

This complete process of social case work should be learned by the student as it occurs in both the long complex case and the short contact. Application of case work processes in short time cases is essential, since it not only speeds all diagnostic thinking but also makes it possible to serve larger numbers of persons effectively in relatively brief contacts. This is important in relation to present day programs of social welfare covering large numbers of persons. In coming to see the potential services which social case work may render, the student should also learn its limitations, as determined in one direction by the readiness and capacity of the client to use help, in another by the competence of the worker, and in still another by the scope of the community resources and agency function.

The case load:

1. The cases should cover a range of problems in such categories as: individual and family needs; childhood, youth, maturity, and old age; various types of normal and pathological human behavior; and various areas of human activity.
2. The cases should also cover in a general way the major problems which are significant for the specific setting.
3. The student's understanding of treatment methods should cover both her own relation to the client and the use of social resources. There should be opportunity for working relationships with other agencies and for cooperation with specialists from other fields.
4. The cases should be adjusted in their relative complexity to (a) the stage of the student's preparation, and (b) her individual capacity and tempo.
5. The student's case load as a whole, while smaller than the regular staff worker's case

load, should give the student some sense of reality in handling cases and in relating the various needs and processes involved. She should acquire some experience in intake processes and in acting under pressure to meet emergency needs.

Case recording: Recording is a supplementary process which accompanies the work with the client. The student learns to produce the record as a tool in case work, for the better understanding and carrying out of all its processes. In writing records she learns to show what is really happening in the situation, that is, all the factors (both tangible and intangible) necessary for study, diagnosis, and treatment. She comes to have some appreciation of the special value of the record in helping her to see herself in the situation. As a by-product of record writing she learns clarity of expression and adequate formulation of ideas.

Related areas where teaching and learning take place: Some of the specific areas which affect case work practice and have been found to be particularly significant in relation to the student's development during her field work are:

Relationships with:

Supervisor

Agency staff

Other professional personnel

Use of time in relation to:

Supervisory conferences

Office routines

Work habits:

Organization and tempo of work

Responsibility for detail

The supervisor aids the student to see how her performance in these various areas is related to effective service to clients, that is, to case work practice.

The supervisory relationship: The supervisor's goal is to help the student develop maturity and flexibility in the performance of her job. During the training period the supervisor studies the student's relationship to her as an individual, in order to understand what patterns of reaction the student presents to a new learning experience, how she incorporates the new material into her thinking and feeling processes, and how she imparts them to the client in the case work relationship. The student has theoretical knowledge of case work skills, but practice allows her to use them. The supervisor helps her to use more consciously her powers of observation, listening, and sensitivity to feelings of others. The

student receives from the supervisor help in developing, maintaining, and evaluating relationships with clients. She learns to discriminate between and have some understanding of the meaning of positive and negative feelings. Through learning to use her own personality in treatment the student comes to understand the client better and at the same time grows professionally herself. This demands a growing awareness of her own emotional reactions and discipline of her feelings and behavior. It is a gradual process of growth, which varies with different individuals. It requires an integration of the emotional and intellectual components in learning to the point where the student, at the end of her training period, should be able to function in a professional capacity.

Methods of teaching in the field:

The following methods, other than case work practice itself, are commonly used in the process of field work teaching:

1. Conferences (supervisor and student):
 - a. Individual students
 - Regularity and use of conference period
 - Control of consultation in periods between conferences
 - b. Groups of students
2. Participation in, and observation of, regular activities of the training agency or other social agencies
 - Staff conferences, case conferences, clinics, intake procedures, etc.
 - Formally planned visits of inspection
 - Observation of skilled practitioners at work
 - Attendance at lectures, community meetings, etc.
3. Study of case material (student's own and other)
4. Specific assignments in reading (related to the student's experience at the time)
5. Other

There is much variation as to the manner in which these methods are used, in relation to: the period of the student's experience, progress in case practice, content of the teaching experience, technical use of the method in teaching, and combination of methods. For instance, some supervisors favor a preliminary period of orientation to an agency (including observation, case study, and conference) before the student begins work on her own cases, while others prefer to initiate the student into case practice (through appropriately selected cases) in the first few days with the agency.

Employment Practices of St. Louis Agency Subject of AASW Inquiry and Report

THE report of the AASW on certain employment practices issues raised by professional staff members of the Family Service Society of St. Louis County was issued officially to the board members, staff members, and to the executive secretary of the Society September 26th.

The staff of the Family Service Society had requested the AASW to study the methods used by the board and the executive of the agency in effecting changes in the supervisory set-up in the agency in early June, to see whether the methods had violated sections of the AASW recommended employment practices. The particular sections cited by the staff in its petition were:

There should be definite though not necessarily formal avenues for participation of the staff in determining agency policies and procedures. There should be adequate opportunity for employees to transmit their working experience and to relate this to changing policies and procedures.

Employment should be based upon agreement as to the specific conditions of work and upon mutual understanding between the agency and the employee as to policies and professional purposes.

The agency should be sufficiently stable financially and administratively to warrant confidence of the employees in its ability to fulfill its agreements and to maintain its program.

The staff petition was made after various efforts of staff members to secure reconsideration of the board action, on the grounds that the staff believed many important factors had not been weighed by the board in connection with its decision. The petition went to the executive committee of the St. Louis Chapter. That committee expressed the belief that the Association should make a study but that in view of local involvement the study should be made under the auspices of the national Association rather than the chapter. Before sending the request to the national office of the Association, the chapter executive committee met first with a representative of the staff and later with the executive secretary of the Family Service Society, and received from the latter some additional questions which he requested should be included in the study. These were questions as to whether some of the staff methods and actions were in line with professional practices. Responsibility for making the study was accepted by the national organization and it was undertaken by Walter West, Executive Secretary.

As the recommendations of the Association

on employment practices were invoked as a basis for the request for action on the part of the AASW, it was possible to limit the scope and method of the study to a use of these employment practices as criteria of sound administration. The study made no attempt to appraise or evaluate the agency set-up, or the quality of its work, or the value of the plan introduced by the board in June.

The inquiry did not encounter serious differences of opinion concerning the major matters of evidence bearing on the methods employed by the board and executive. After the first draft of the report was completed, the board, staff and executive were each given the opportunity to make suggestions or corrections. Material supplied by the board and executive is attached as a supplement to the report.

On the basis of the findings of the inquiry it was concluded that the methods used by the board and executive had violated each of the employment practices statements as recommended by the AASW which had been invoked by the F.S.S. staff. The report noted further that the failure of the executive to discharge the responsibilities required of one in his position, on behalf of both the board and staff, left the principal burden for violations of employment practices on the executive secretary of the F.S.S. The report also concluded that there was not evidence of violations of employment practices by the staff in connection with the questions about which the executive secretary had asked the Association to inquire.

The report, after time was allowed for criticism, was delivered to the board, staff, and executive secretary, September 26, and the study was concluded.

On receipt of the completed report the professional staff of the agency called the board's attention to the findings and conclusions, requesting reconsideration of the original action on the basis of the evidence presented in the report. The board took action at a meeting on October 16th to re-employ the executive secretary for another year, set up a joint board and staff committee to restore a "working basis in the Society," and adopted a 600 word statement concerning the AASW report and the responsibilities of the staff of the agency. The F.S.S. board expressed interest in the report, did not accept it as full or accurate, but did not

specify errors or deficiencies. The statement expressed sympathy and respect for the "principles of professional practices" as stated in the report, assumed they expressed an ideal which social agencies did not follow uniformly, but affirmed its intention to consult the staff in matters of major importance in the future. Deviation from such practices was not considered as reasons for staff action, which had "contributed to the lessening of consultation by the executive with the supervisors and the staff."

On learning of the board's action, six members of the agency staff presented their resignations to take effect November 18th, on the grounds that the board action made further staff service professionally compromising.

Meanwhile the situation was further complicated when the resignation of the case supervisor was requested shortly after receipt of the first draft of the report, and when the executive secretary dismissed one of the other two supervisors although previous actions had repeatedly endorsed her competence and value to the agency and although nothing in the report could be construed as a reason for dismissals. Social Service Employees Union, Local 83, of which several of the petitioning staff were members, with the backing of the central council of the CIO of St. Louis, has taken up the question of dismissals and the problem of standards of service in the agency, and matters of administration as indicated in the AASW report. The union at the request of the F.S.S. staff members had not taken action even on what it considered the unwarranted dismissals of the supervisors, pending the outcome of the staff request for board reconsideration of its original action. It is now engaged in an active campaign for remedial action by the F.S.S. board. The union has requested the cooperation of the AASW in protection of the interest of the workers on the staff of the agency. The St. Louis Chapter of the AASW will have a meeting shortly to discuss its course of action.

At its meeting October 18th and 19th the National Board of the AASW took the following action with reference to the St. Louis study:

The National Board affirms that the scope of the inquiry as outlined by Mr. West in the beginning and adhered to by him throughout, very clearly expresses the proper function of the Association in such a situation; that the total evidence in the possession of the National Board indicates that the report is an accurate statement of the facts.

The National Board approved the objec-

tives of the Association in the study as follows:

1. To respond to the request of social workers for a professional judgment on the validity of a particular agency's practice affecting the professional welfare of those social workers;
2. Arriving at facts with respect to the application of the Association's *Statement about Standard Employment Practices in Social Work* in a particular situation;
3. To offer a factual basis to give the particular agency a chance to improve its own procedures;
4. To use the experience gleaned from this situation to help other agencies improve their procedures.

The National Board expressed its belief that the first three of these objectives have been achieved and that the findings furnish a basis for further advance by the Association with respect to this professional function.

The National Board defined the report as: the document originally submitted with the addition of the statement by the F.S.S. executive of October 16, 1940.

The National Board ordered copies of the report delivered to the members of the Executive Committee of the St. Louis Chapter. It also ordered that a copy, together with a report of the National Board's action, be given to the Social Work Vocational Bureau for its vocational use in connection with prospective employers and employees for whom the report would have significance.

The National Board ordered that a report of the situation be published in *THE COMPASS*.

The National Board in order to make the report available for professional use, voted that members of the Association might purchase copies at cost price.

The National Board directed the staff to communicate with the FWAA, the SSEU, and other organizations which might be interested in the inquiry, in order that the most constructive and judicious use could be made of the findings of the inquiry.

The National Board authorized the President to appoint a special committee to study the report and to report back to the National Board on the need for further procedures to be established by the Association in connection with future inquiries. It was provided that this action would not, except for the specific purpose assigned to the special committee, supersede the general assignment covering such issues given previously by the National Board to the National Personnel Practices Committee.

Place of Probation and Parole

To the Editor of THE COMPASS:

The small group of social workers in the field of delinquency have looked to social case work as the source for improved standards in this area. It therefore comes as a shock, when the American Association of Social Workers, through any of its committees, raises the question of differences between training for social work which the present requirements of the AASW define as basic for membership, and training needed for probation and parole work. Most startling was the committee report presented at the last AASW delegate meeting, which discussed training for the fields of "public welfare, community organization, group work, and probation and parole" as alike requiring review in the light of qualification for membership in the AASW. While undoubtedly a case can be made for basic case work as essential for work in all of the fields enumerated, the work of the probation and parole officer which so definitely calls for treatment skills would seem to belong unquestionably in the case work field. Such additional skills as may be necessary to meet requirements of contact with official agencies need to be scrutinized carefully and training facilities provided. However, social workers should be sufficiently secure in what constitutes social case work and minimum training therefor as to recognize parole and probation as a responsibility of its field.

The outstanding development in the administration of criminal law for more than half a century, has been the use of probation as a tool in rehabilitation of offenders, without the disorganizing experience of prison service. Paralleling the growth of the probation idea, but moving much more slowly, has been the realization that the probation job requires special training, qualifying the officer for the understanding of personality development, motivation to conduct, resources within the individual, the family, the community, etc. A heartening corollary of a more recent date is the realization that parole, after prison service, requires the same sort of professional preparation which has been accepted in probation work.

I am grateful for the humility which professional development has brought and for the courage which is being shown in facing inability to treat in certain individual cases. However, declaring a category of individuals to be untreatable because of their social experience is not humility but rather the

opposite because it sets the end of achievement at the end already attained, instead of recognizing the possibility of further development in professional skills. While I am thoroughly aware of the patronage significance of the probation and parole job, and the difficulty of establishing requisite merit standards in this field, I wish earnestly to make the social work profession aware of the part it has played in the negative attitude toward the possibility of treatment of Court wards.

The approach of the professional social worker to the field of probation (the term is here used to include parole), has been characterized by a mixture of contempt because of the method of selection of probation officers, discretionary appointment, etc., and, particularly in the past decade, a fear of the authoritarian role in treatment.

Social workers should have been sufficiently aware of the meaning of authority in the life of the client, irrespective of any definition in law, to have avoided the panic that seems to have assailed us in the treatment of offenders who have come under Court jurisdiction. Criminal laws for the most part, reflect the accepted mores of the group enacting such laws. As such, the administration of criminal law is a part of the reality which a case worker must help his client face. This reality has been allowed to assume much more sinister proportions as against mores not necessarily embodied in the law but equally effective in defining an individual's relation to the social area in which he is expected to function. The entire field of public relief is frequently dominated by less flexible laws or public administrative policies than the field of correction. However, fortunately, the social work profession has here recognized the greater need for social case work skills instead of relinquishing the field. In public relief the case worker has come to recognize the limitation of authority in her relation to her client, and has used her skill in helping the client to understand the sources from which this authority emanates, so that she has been relieved of the identification which she seems to feel is inevitable in working with delinquents.

There is a growing group of public officials in the field of delinquency which understands the relation between well trained personnel and the purposes probation and parole are designed to achieve. The Federal Government has been outstanding in its frank appeal to professional social workers as the principal treatment resource. Together with other public officials in the field, they have recog-

nized social case work skills as fundamental to this task. The Federal Judges in the Chicago area have created an Advisory Committee on Probation Personnel composed of social workers and educators in the social work field, to assist them in the selection of personnel. This development in the method of selecting effective probation officers will be injured if the professional social worker continues to present uneasiness in the use of case work skills in working with wards of the Court. The AASW can and will make a real contribution in this field by recognizing that work with "individuals in trouble" requires the same basic professional education irrespective of the social setting in which such individuals find themselves.

Social workers who know the uphill fight for good standards in work with delinquents hope that the AASW will be galvanized into a re-examination of their responsibility in this area.

SARAH B. SCHAAR
Chicago, Oct. 8, 1940

[Mrs. Schaar's objection to the phrasing of assignments for study by subcommittees of the National Membership Committee was shared by the Committee itself. The Committee decided to take up the questions about the different fields in the form in which they are commonly discussed but noted that the term "field" is used in non-parallel ways encouraging to confusions about similarities and differences. Sometimes it refers to an auspice, as in public welfare "field," sometimes to a method as in the case work or group work "field," sometimes to a particular setting as in probation and parole, and sometimes to a grouping of agencies as in the family welfare or child welfare "field."—THE EDITOR.]

EVALUATION PLANS

The F.W.A.A. has recently published a pamphlet on evaluation which may be of interest to chapters and members working on methods of measuring competent performance. Entitled "Evaluations of Staff Members in Private Family Agencies" the pamphlet comprises an analysis by Margaret Kauffman and Helen Malmud, of plans and forms submitted to the F.W.A.A. by ten of its member agencies. A variety of methods is illustrated, covering supervisors, case workers and clerical workers. The authors conclude with the suggestion that much careful study is needed of practice itself to develop accurate job specifications for social work positions which can be used as a basis for developing criteria of performance. This suggestion stems from their belief in "the philosophy that practice is the only fair and realistic measuring rod of standards of expectancy in performance."

Reports on Social Work Jobs

Louise Odencrantz, director of the Social Work Vocational Bureau, has reported 232 agencies have filed notice of vacancies since June and that while about half came from North Atlantic states, the other half were reported by agencies in the south, middle west, and far west, even from as far afield as Alaska, Hawaii and China.

The following paragraphs summarize other parts of the report:

The largest number of vacancies were reported by family welfare and child welfare agencies.

A third of the vacancies reported were for executive, supervisory and teaching positions, and about half of the placements were in executive or supervisory positions.

The SWVB is limiting its services to the case work agencies. The agency now has nearly 700 individual memberships including 110 recent students from the schools of social work. The membership is primarily interested in placement service, but there is also considerable interest in the need of having personal histories and references on file for future use. About 15 per cent have joined because of their interest in maintaining the Bureau and do not wish any service at this time.

The list includes many executives, case consultants and supervisors, as well as practitioners. A high proportion of the members are employed but seeking new opportunities for promotion in position or salary or change in field of work or location. Many wish to be considered for placement only if a particular kind of opportunity should arise.

Of the members, 573 had some training in a school of social work and 407 hold degrees, diplomas, or certificates, and 103 have taken full time work but have not completed work for a certificate or degree. The major field of work was listed by 189 as child welfare, 159 family welfare, 67 psychiatric social work, and 50 as medical social work. Some mentioned social work teaching, probation or parole, visiting teaching, institutional administration, work in councils and federations, and research.

As of October 5th, SWVB had 137 agency members, of which 63 were family welfare and 33 child welfare organizations while seven provided both family and child welfare service. Services are given to non-member agencies for the present.

Considerable counselling service is being requested by members, both in personal interview and by mail.

Various state civil service commissions as well as the federal Civil Service Commission provide the Bureau with announcements of examinations for social work positions. This information is being sent on to members who are qualified and interested.

In addition to Miss Odencrantz, the Bureau has two vocational secretaries, Margaret Conant and Margaret Mack. The office is at 122 East 22nd Street, New York City.



National Board Meeting

The first meeting of the National Board since last summer's election was held in New York October 18 and 19 and took up the pending matters of business and program. Minutes, according to custom, will be sent to the chairmen of all chapters and special reports of various actions will appear in later issues of THE COMPASS.

Plans, assignments, and personnel of the Association's committees were subjects of action, and the various mandates of the last Delegate Conference followed up. A budget was adopted for 1941, and many other matters, including the St. Louis report mentioned in another article in this COMPASS, came in for extended attention.

Members present were: Pierce Atwater, Chicago, James Brunot, New York, Mrs. Irene Conrad, Texas, Louis Evans, Indianapolis, E. Marguerite Gane, Buffalo, Lester Granger, New York, Eleanor Hearon, Denver, Frank Hertel, Minneapolis, Donald S. Howard, New York, Sara H. James, Minneapolis, Lillian Johnson, Seattle, Ruth Lewis, St. Louis, Mrs. Aileen Maccracken, Cleveland, Kenneth Pray, Philadelphia, Margaret Rich, Pittsburgh, Mary Stanton, Los Angeles, Margaret Woll, Kentucky. President Wayne McMillen presided over the morning, afternoon and evening sessions which the agenda required for both days of the meeting.



Public Agency Services

(Continued from page 6)

to distinguish what the client *must do*, and the service which the agency has to offer with which he *may do it*.

This aim—the provision of services—may seem a cold and colorless purpose; it may imply, to some, a *laissez faire* attitude which

has no real concern for the client's well-being. This attitude is certainly possible, but it is equally possible to express concern and warmth of feeling in developing more adequate and better services. Anything else seems to me to be an assumption of responsibility which we can seldom fulfill, and whether we attempt it with force or with tact and persuasiveness, an unsound basis for our relationship with the usual client seeking help. This is not the place to discuss at length casework philosophy, and I can only state that the thinking of the paper is based on the premise that our goal is to provide services rather than a generalized help by which we hope to make better adjusted people.

With this as a fundamental base, I would like to state some of the positive and negative factors which are involved in giving many services in one agency, considering them from the standpoint of the community which provides; the client who uses; and the agency which administers these services.

From the Standpoint of the Community:

We would probably accept it as axiomatic that the community is not a unit with a consistent point of view; that no two communities are alike; that the community is made up of people and groups with varying degrees and kinds of connectedness with a social work program; that the community which has real concern with a public agency is much more extensive than that which is concerned with any one private agency; and that the community will support what it genuinely accepts. Is it possible, then, to arrive at any common denominator which will represent what the community wants in public provision for individuals in need, and therefore what the community will support not only with funds at any given time, but with backing which means growth and permanent development?

It seems to me first of all, that the community wants *conservation of funds*. This is different from wanting true economy of operation, which might at times mean expenditure of funds. But for a variety of reasons which cannot be discussed in detail here, the community wants to spend as little as necessary on services to individuals.

At the same time, the public wants *coverage*. That is, it wants to have a place where different kinds of difficulty can be reported and something done about them. This, again, is different from adequacy of provision though it may grow to mean adequacy of provision.

Then the community also wants to *know* what is going on. It does not want the details of method, point of view, and procedure, which are part of the administration of services; but a simple, understandable *idea of what is available and how*.

Efficiency and *quality* of service are two other wants which are held primarily by a very few and gradually developed to a limited extent by more people.

However we regard these wants on the part of the community, the extent to which they are met may easily determine the extent to which public services will be available and in some degree the quality which these services will have. It is therefore important to analyze the effect of the multiple function agency upon these wants. In the *conservation of funds* the multiple function agency has much to recommend it, and for various reasons. The extent, however, to which the benefits of economy can be realized depends a good deal on whether a real combination is made. One of the biggest fallacies in estimating the advantages of merger is to say that it will cost less money and then fail to take necessary, if painful, steps which make combination more economical than separate functioning.

The minimum meant by *coverage*, which is all that is demanded by a large part of the community (that is, a spot where any kind of trouble can be referred and some attention paid to it), is without doubt more surely achieved by one agency responsible for many functions. But in its minimum aspects this merely provides a dumping ground for problems and for blame. If we consider some of the more constructive aspects of coverage which are desired by part, and perhaps in time by most of the community, we find that the multiple function agency has dangers as well as assets. Really adequate coverage demands sufficient provision in staff and money for each additional service, and this is frequently disregarded when a new function is appended to an already existing agency. There is a strong tendency to overlook or underestimate what is involved in giving this service or assuming this responsibility. It is simply absorbed and the result is unwarranted pressure upon the agency and worker, decreased efficiency in other services, and no chance to start the new service on a sound basis. It is therefore essential to determine whether additional functions will in the long run mean curtailment or provision on a more adequate scale.

Looking at the other side of this question

of coverage, it seems likely that one of the reasons for the spottiness of resources to meet individual need is that special services frequently have been developed in water-tight compartments, and that continued emphasis has been placed on one service, sometimes because of inertia, sometimes because of the vested interest of boards and staffs, to the exclusion of others which are equally important.

Real *knowledge of what is available, and how*, is hard for the community to have, and a multiple function agency both helps and hinders the achievement of this. In general, it seems to me that when many services are given in one agency the public is more likely to have some knowledge and less likely to have *exact* knowledge. The very inclusion of many different kinds of activity under one roof tends to becloud essential distinctions between these different kinds. The Welfare seems to do everything. Is there any difference between what it does and what the client has to do if he needs money, or when his child has been arrested for stealing, or when he wants a relative committed to the state hospital? This is partly due to a lack of clarity and simplicity about the conditions of eligibility and what is involved in taking assistance; but it is also true that a different setup tends to objectify and make real the distinctions that do exist.

There is also the kind of knowledge which the most closely connected part of the community wants and must have if the different kinds of services are to grow in scope and quality. This is a real understanding of what is involved in *giving* help, the framework of procedure, policy, method, skill which is necessary in providing child placing, financial assistance, care for neglected children, and other kinds of help.

The stage of development of the program has a good deal to do with the kind of knowledge a board member has to have in order to plan for the progressive growth of the program. When public social services are new to the community; when only the most emergent situations can be met, general knowledge and fundamental soundness is a pretty adequate base. But as services grow and extend, something different in efficiency and quality is needed from the worker and from the agency, and this is not likely to be forthcoming unless the Board has some idea of what is involved in a progressive developing job.

Part II which appraises the advantages of multiple services from the standpoint of the client and of the agency will be printed in the December COMPASS.

New Relief Changes

Two recent studies of relief needs, in which chapters have taken a leading role, make significant contributions to this troubled subject. They are the Denver Relief Study and "Stones for Bread," the report published by the Missouri Association for Social Welfare.

The Denver study was made by the Bureau of Public Welfare with many organizations cooperating, after the AASW chapter had initiated the plan. The chapter also contributed financially and helped promote support for the study by the community. The State Department of Public Welfare assisted materially. Jean P. Sinnock, of the Department of Social Work, University of Denver, wrote the report which emphasizes what the Denver Council of Social Agencies calls "a new kind of starvation."

To reinforce the value of the Denver study, the chapter invited representatives of all citizen organizations to a special September meeting. By that time it was disclosed that the general relief load in Denver County had increased over 50% from January to July, 1940. Special appropriations by the City to supplement the State allotment made it possible "to continue payments of 35% or 40% of monthly basic budgets."

Following this Chapter meeting, a letter was sent to the Denver Citizens Relief Committee and to presidents and boards of social agencies and social work executives, urging wide circulation of the findings and recommendations of the study as a first step in the solution of the problems it reveals.

The Missouri study, *Stones for Bread*, was published by the Missouri Association for Social Welfare. The leading sections of the report are the contributions of the Kansas City and St. Louis Chapters, the work in each instance being done by Norma Davidson of the Kansas City Unit of the Department of Social Work, Washington University, and Dorothy W. Burke, Chairman of the Committee on the Relief Survey of the St. Louis Chapter. The Central Missouri Chapter also cooperated in gathering data. Benjamin Youngdahl and C. W. Pfeiffer were co-chairmen of the Special Committee on Relief, and Mary B. Taussig edited the report.

It is attractively printed and illustrated with cartoons, pictograph charts and photographs and is arranged in question and answer form. Questions include: "Who are these people on relief? How do they get along? What has become of those who were not able to obtain relief?"

The foreword states that Missouri, in May 1940, was cited in national magazines because

of its extremely low relief standards. In March 1940, it gave an average relief grant of \$13.51 per family per month, only half the national average relief grant of \$24.87. Even the national average falls far below the amount required for a "minimum subsistence" living. Because of shortage of funds, the rolls have been cut almost entirely to unemployable, handicapped families. Almost half of these persons are children and young people under 20 years of age. Beyond these are another whole group of people—the needy employable unemployed—who can obtain no relief at all.

Because of urgent need for action, the Missouri Association for Social Welfare appointed a Special Committee on Relief early in 1940, one of whose functions was to collect data for public information. The present report is a result of the Committee's research.

It is a convincing readable picture of people in the cities, on the farms, in the Ozarks, in "swamp-east" Missouri in the south, with data gathered from a wide variety of sources in a cooperative effort bound to exert substantial influence on the future program which the report outlines.

These studies are important not only as contributions to the data on relief needs, but also as outstanding illustrations of chapter activity in collaboration with other groups in the promotion of improved public social services.

(Copies of the Denver study may be obtained from AASW national office at 25c per copy. The Missouri report is available at the office of the State Assn. for Social Welfare, Brown Hall, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., and is priced at 50c per copy, postpaid.)

FOR REFERENCE USE

"Report of the Civil Service Committee"—Cleveland Chapter, March 1940. This report is a statement of suggested minimum qualifications for social work positions in child welfare and family case work. These recommendations have been used with the local civil service commission, and also sent to a number of social agencies for comment. In view of the situation in Ohio where educational requirements are prohibited, the Committee supplemented its statement of recommended qualifications with suggested substitutes to be used to conform with the Civil Service Law. The Committee has reported that since promulgation of the statement it has been able to make a considerable advance in developing understanding as to the reasons for professional training.

Service Ratings

(Continued from page 4)

work and in the field of research psychology have much to offer each other in working out plans that will fulfill the real objective. If there is not some understanding of the fundamental principles of evaluation through the use of service rating plans and if some leadership in that field is not available, it is advisable not to install a formal plan. Evaluation itself goes on whether or not any formal plan exists. It is the responsibility of the agency to determine what is the best use of its resources. Many merit system agencies operate under a statute requiring efficiency service ratings; that situation represents the well-known horse of another color. That situation increases responsibility for developing fair standards of rating because in the field of social work there has been an increasing number of workers in the public field and social work programs have been altered substantially.

A few basic principles for development and use of service rating plans will be outlined here in the hope, not that they will be accepted as specific instructions, but in the hope, rather, that they will offer a starting point for more lengthy inquiry into the whole subject.

The kind of rating plan that is formulated and the method of using it varies with the purpose of the plan. If it is to be used to form a basis on which personnel actions are to be taken, such as promotion, transfer, and separation, the rating scale will include items selected with that purpose in mind. If it is to be used solely for development of staff it will include items directed toward that purpose.

In developing a formal plan for evaluation of performance, participation of the total staff is necessary. The objectives must be clearly understood and accepted and the participation must be continuous from the initial steps to the completion of their use. Before performance in any position can be rated it is essential to determine in advance what the duties of the position are; these must be analyzed and set forth in terms of functional factors. If social case workers can achieve this, the next step will not be so difficult. That is the determination of what qualities are necessary to perform the duties of the position. This constant definition of qualities in relation to analysis of the job is of primary importance. Unless the job has been analyzed to the fullest possible extent, the determination of qualities necessary to perform the job becomes merely an indoor sport.

A service rating plan designed to distinguish between the performance of a first-year worker and the second-year or more advanced worker will be ineffective unless the duties of the first-year worker, in contrast with those of the second-year worker, have been carefully analyzed and listed.

Those who know much about this problem approach it with awareness of its difficulties and without insistence on the infallibility of any scale. There are, however, some rules on which there appears to be general agreement in the preparation of a scale to be used. One is that each item on the scale must be simple and brief, and that the total scale have the same characteristics. The description of each point in the scale must be as specific as possible so that it will mean the same thing to most rating officers. No rating scale can be successful if the meaning of each point in it is not easily and uniformly understood. In attempting to make a scale composed of items that are "brief and simple" there is the danger of using items that look and sound simple but actually may not be so; for example, "accuracy" may sound acceptable but one type of position requires accuracy of a different kind from that another type of position requires. The burden of rating a large number of employees may also become an intolerable one and therefore deteriorate into a thoughtless routine if the rating form requires a lengthy evaluating process. On the other hand, there is the danger of oversimplifying the form and thereby reducing the number of factors or qualities on which an employee may be rated. Because of the importance of evaluation of performance, deliberation rather than speed is of greater value. Consequently it is well not to fall into "the simplicity fallacy." In large civil service jurisdictions where performance in a wide variety of fields must be rated through use of one or a small number of rating forms, these forms must of necessity be brief if they are to be used at all. Such a situation, however, does not preclude additional effort on the part of the operating bureaus. For example, the Public Assistance Services Unit in the District of Columbia's Department of Public Welfare, has added definitions to the elements on the Service Rating Form used by the United States Civil Service Commission and adapted them for use in the social case work field. These definitions were worked out by the staff itself and are being modified as the staff becomes aware of possible improvements. A practice sometimes followed in agencies of a large insurance company is to rate each supervisor before the rating scale is put into gen-

eral use; this practice is believed by one company to give the supervisors an appreciation of employee's reactions to rating.

With the primary objective of a service rating plan in mind and with the rating scale in hand, the next consideration is the method of using service ratings. The development of the scale and the method of its use will be determined to some extent by some purposes associated with the primary objective. If service ratings are to be used in planning for promotions, salary increases, demotions, transfers and separations it is important to remember that rating is designed to provide a basis for helping the employee to improve himself and that it is based on actual performance on a particular job.

In considering the method of using any service rating plan the following aspects of its use will be considered: (1) completeness, (2) continuity, (3) during the probationary period, (4) supervision of rating officers, (5) discussion with employees after rating, (6) adjustments of ratings, (7) rating on performance.

No matter how valid a rating scale may be, it will die unloved and unsung unless it is part of a service rating plan that is understood by all who use it and is used to its fullest extent. Although there are probably no claims to a perfect plan, even an inferior one can be helpful in staff development if it is used constructively and continuously. Of major importance in this connection are the worker-supervisor relationship preceding the actual evaluation of the worker, the evaluation itself and its recording, and the relationship which continues between the worker and supervisor after the evaluation has been made.⁴

In observing some of the outlines for evaluation that are being used or developed by social case workers and in observing some of the qualities listed in rating scales designed to measure the performance of this group, some inherent dangers have been noted. In order to determine whether or not a worker possesses some of the qualities listed on the scale or outline and to what degree he possesses them, a close relationship between supervisor and worker would have to be established. The danger lies in the evaluation process becoming a therapeutic process. This is in itself a danger which becomes even more serious when the therapeutic process goes beyond the ability of some supervisors to

handle it and beyond the readiness of some workers to accept it. This potential danger raises questions related to professional education and recruitment but is noted here as a problem of administration. Even though service rating aims at staff development there remains the real situation that a social case work agency exists to perform designated functions to individuals in the community. A plan of service rating which requires major attention on internal staff problems is likely to defeat the rendering of the services which the agency purports to render.

No process involving observing human behavior on a job can be performed on a given date semi-annually or annually unless the supervisor of the worker is prepared for the rating process. Through his continuing relationship with the worker to be rated the informed and thoughtful supervisor makes continuous though informal notes on specific weaknesses and strengths in a worker's performance; he discusses some aspects whenever the need for doing so arises. Before the time arrives for periodic recorded evaluations the good administrator has discussed the use of the rating scale to be used with the supervisors who are to do the rating; he lets them do the talking and the deciding as to how they can best approach uniform rating standards. When the periodic evaluation is recorded and given to the worker it does not come as a surprise to him. A worker needs to know and wants to know on what qualities he is being rated. The conference between supervisor and worker following its receipt does not then become a situation in which the supervisor is called on to justify the rating given. The worker on the other hand may be less likely to be defensive about a rating which is less than the best.

Close observation, note taking and conference are of primary importance during the probationary period. New workers need to know what is expected of them. They have a right to expect help during their initial period of employment and the supervisor is there to give it to them. The supervisor also has the obligation of protecting the agency from having appointed to its permanent staff those workers who seem to be incapable of growth. That is a radical diagnosis to make and, because it is the supervisor's responsibility during the probationary period, he must devote time and thought to supervising and rating new workers even if it means lessening his attention to workers who have become an established part of the organization. The use of a service rating plan during the probationary period which is different from

⁴ Cf. Memo. on "The Use of Staff Evaluations in a Staff Development Program," Social Security Bd. Bureau of Public Assistance, Div. on Technical Training, December, 1939.

that used for permanent employees offers one aid to the kind of careful evaluation necessary during the beginning period.

Rating officers incline to work with greater accuracy when they realize they are rating actual performance in a particular position. An employee cannot properly be rated on his potential ability to do another job by using a rating scale which is designed to measure his ability to perform the duties of the position in which he is now. For example, if a social case worker achieves a rating of "excellent," it is not fair either to him or the position to deduce that he will likewise perform as an excellent or even a good case supervisor. Behavior which does not affect performance at work is not considered a ratable element but may be dealt with administratively. A salesman known to the rating officer may be able to get drunk every night but his work performance is not affected; when his drunkenness becomes known to the community and reflects discredit on his employer he can be dismissed for cause even though his work performance continues at the same level of efficiency as before his personal defection became known.

The number of rating officers who evaluate performance and the ways in which ratings are reviewed depend on the kind of rating scale used, the size of the organization and its administrative structure. In the earlier brief description of various kinds of rating scales this variation was indicated. In reviewing ratings in order to correct errors, statistical techniques are sometimes used in order to fit the ratings into a "normal curve." Rating officers are sometimes informed as to the proportion of employees who should be rated in each quality group. One criticism of this procedure is that it is based on a concept taken from the field of psychology where it was functioning properly within its limitations and where groups being rated under experimental controls constituted random unselected samples. Employees selected because of certain minimum qualifications represent a selected group and not a random sampling. In some positions the duties are of such a responsible nature and recruitment has been on such a high standard that a skewed distribution may be the only valid distribution possible.

In an organization where activities are pursued under high pressure and which is so large that the administrator and supervisors cannot handle all of the personnel work it becomes important to have a personnel officer on the staff. This personnel officer, although

having no administrative authority, may be able to devote sufficient time to advise in regard to service ratings and work cooperatively with supervisors and workers. The presence of a personnel officer in a large organization may also be helpful in establishing procedures whereby employees can appeal their ratings in the event that conferences with supervisors do not give satisfaction.

An attempt has been made in this discussion to indicate a few of the current practices in the use of formal rating plans. Those of you who have wrestled with methods of evaluation have seen that no worth-while rating plan can become an automatic system. Sources of error may be reduced to a minimum but there will always be the necessity of continuous improvement and close application if any plan is to be kept from becoming a super-imposed "system." A summary of the stage of achievement in their development and use is given by H. S. Belinsky.⁵ He suggests that personnel policy has been the creature of administrative expediency in the past but that "service rating plans will not be abandoned, however. The primary concerns of personnel administration are effective management of human resources and fair treatment for each employee. Rating scales are by no means the only way much of the information necessary to implement these objectives can be obtained; it has been and is the easiest and simplest way. So long as its limitations are recognized it will remain the most satisfactory administrative device by which unsystematic and irregular standards and measures of success can be supplemented and important assistance given to the intelligent use and development of public service personnel."

Social case workers have assumed their responsibilities for staff development conscientiously. There is not much likelihood of their becoming discouraged at the difficulties inherent in working out any plan of evaluation. There seems to have been considerable resistance on the part of case workers to analyzing and defining the skills or qualities that make a good case worker and listing those qualities in terms that would lend themselves to rating. This resistance seems to be based on the interpretation of case work as an art rather than a science. There has been developed by case workers, however, a wealth of material that any social worker or research

⁵ Belinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

psychologist would be proud of. The answer to the question of "How do we evaluate social case work performance?" lies with those who are doing case work, who are willing to labor with carefully controlled experiments and who are willing to learn what the research psychologists and other researchers have to offer. There may never come a time when a formal rating plan will be developed which can measure the subtleties of human behavior and understanding with which some social case workers are concerned. It seems reasonable to believe, however, that continuing attempts to attain a highly desirable goal will bring the value that all worth-while struggle brings.

THE WASHINGTON, D. C., CHAPTER would like to establish contact with all AASW members moving to Washington either permanently or temporarily. All such members are urged therefore to get in touch with William H. Savin, Chapter Chairman, at the Family Service Association as soon as possible after arrival in the city, or with Mrs. Frances P. Simsarian, Executive Secretary of the Chapter, 6444 31st Street, N.W.

Case Work Paper Contest

The Case Work Section of the National Conference of Social Work announces a second competition for the demonstration of case work practice similar to the one which was held last year. The case work practice presented must be the *participant's own work* on an active case. Papers shall be presented according to the following rules:

Open only to case workers of a minimum of four years experience carrying a case load in a public or private agency, of which two may have been in a professional school of social work.

Manuscripts are limited to 2500 words of which not more than a thousand shall be case material and the rest discussion of case. Manuscripts must be typed and case material set off in distinguishable way. All case and place names *must be disguised*.

The worker's name, agency, address and years of experience shall accompany paper in attached and sealed envelope.

Writers of the three best papers will be invited to present them at a meeting of the Case Work Section at the National Conference at Atlantic City.

All papers must be in by February 15. The judges, who will be selected by the Program Committee of Section I, are under no obligation to return material.

Send to Ruth Smalley, Chairman, Case Work Paper Contest, School of Applied Social Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Announcing Two New Pamphlets—reprinted from recent COMPASS articles

FOUR ARTICLES ON EVALUATION

To all interested in evaluations, these four papers * will be useful for their recapitulations of recent experience with evaluations, their indications of agreements derived from that experience and their suggestions about problems and practices needing further study.

* Values and Limitations of the Evaluation Process

As Seen by the Worker *Martha Perry*

Values and Limitations of the Evaluation Process

As Seen by the Supervisor *Frances Schmidt*

Evaluation of Field Work Performance by a Professional School *Leah Feder*

Use of Service Ratings in the Evaluation of Performance *Elizabeth Cosgrove*

SOCIAL WORK AND THE MERIT SYSTEM

These two papers * approach the problems involved in making civil service realize the purposes set by the interest which the profession and the public share in sound personnel administration and offer provocative guidance to social workers who wish to see that it is social workers who are chosen to perform the functions of social work.

* Standards and Problems of the Merit System

Elizabeth Cosgrove

Social Work's Responsibility for Sound Merit Selection *Dorothy C. Kahn*

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

130 East 22d Street, New York, N. Y.

Please send me copies—FOUR ARTICLES ON EVALUATION

..... copies—SOCIAL WORK AND THE MERIT SYSTEM

at 15¢ per copy, post paid.
(Prices on quantities)

Attached is my check or money order for \$..... (Do not send cash.)

NAME
(Print plainly in ink)

STREET AND NO.

CITY OR TOWN STATE

